

Ernest Hemingway, who gained his first fame as a war reporter in 1918, chats with G.I.'s before leaving to cover biggest action yet

# Voyage to Victory

BY ERNEST HEMINGWAY

RADIOED FROM LONDON

Collier's famed war correspondent watches, as our fighting men battle across the beaches into Normandy

NO ONE remembers the date of the Battle of Shiloh. But the day we took Fox Green beach was the sixth of June, and the wind was blowing hard out of the northwest. As we moved in toward land in the gray early light, the 36-foot coffin-shaped steel boats took solid green sheets of water that fell on the helmeted heads of the troops packed shoulder to shoulder in the stiff, awkward, uncomfortable, lonely companionship of men going to a battle. There were cases of TNT, with rubber-tube life preservers wrapped around them to float them in the surf, stacked forward in the steel

well of the LCV(P), and there were piles of bazookas and boxes of bazooka rockets encased in waterproof coverings that reminded you of the transparent raincoats college girls wear.

All this equipment, too, had the rubber-tube life preservers strapped and tied on, and the men wore these same gray rubber tubes strapped under their armpits.

As the boat rose to a sea, the green water turned white and came slamming in over the men, the guns and the cases of explosives. Ahead you could see the coast of France. The gray booms and derrick-forested bulks of the attack transports were behind now, and, over all the sea, boats were crawling forward toward France.

As the LCV(P) rose to the crest of a wave, you saw the line of low, silhouetted cruisers and the two big battlewagons lying broadside to the shore. You saw the heat-bright flashes of their guns and the brown smoke

that pushed out against the wind and then blew away.

"What's your course, coxswain?" Lieutenant (jg) Robert Anderson of Roanoke, Virginia, shouted from the stern.

"Two-twenty, sir," the coxswain, Frank Currier of Saugus, Massachusetts, answered. He was a thin-faced, freckled boy with his eyes fixed on the compass.

"Then steer two-twenty, damn it!" Anderson said. "Don't steer all over the whole damn' ocean!"

"I'm steering two-twenty, sir," the coxswain said patiently.

"Well, steer it, then," Andy said. He was nervous, but the boat crew, who were making their first landing under fire, knew this officer had taken LCV(P)s in to the African landing, Sicily and Salerno, and they had confidence in him.

"Don't steer into that LCT," Andy shouted, as we roared by the ugly steel hull

of a tank landing craft, her vehicles sea-lashed, her troops huddling out of the spray.

"I'm steering two-twenty," the coxswain said.

"That doesn't mean you have to run into everything on the ocean," Andy said. He was a handsome, hollow-cheeked boy with a lot of style and a sort of easy petulance. "Mr. Hemingway, will you please see if you can see what that flag is over there, with your glasses?"

I got my old miniature Zeiss glasses out of an inside pocket, where they were wrapped in a woolen sock with some tissue to clean them, and focused them on the flag. I made the flag out just before a wave drenched the glasses.

"It's green."

"Then we are in the mine-swept channel," Andy said. "That's all right. Coxswain, what's the matter with you? Can't you steer two-twenty?"



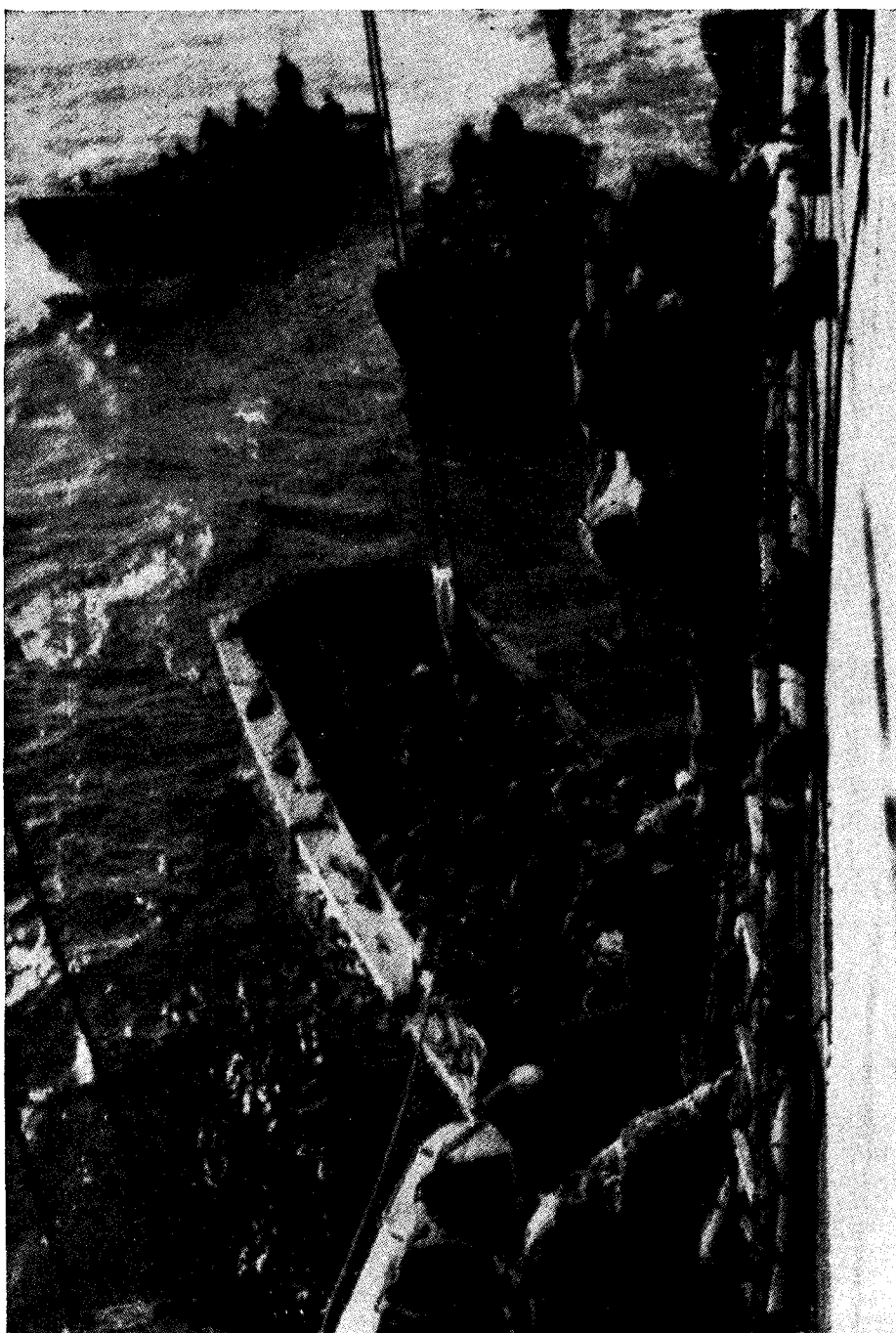


Medical Corps men talk to a wounded Nazi who said he was fifteen years old. Asked about Hitler, he merely shook his head



"We had studied the charts, the silhouettes, the data on the obstacles in the water and the defenses all one morning. Ahead was every landmark"

"... The boats are lowered into the roaring, churning assembly circle from which they break off into the attack wave"



I was trying to dry my glasses, but it was hopeless the way the spray was coming in, so I wrapped them up for a try later on and watched the battleship Texas shelling the shore. She was just off on our right now and firing over us as we moved in toward the French coast, which was showing clearer all the time on what was, or was not, a course of 220 degrees, depending on whether you believed Andy or Currier the coxswain.

The low cliffs were broken by valleys. There was a town with a church spire in one of them. There was a wood that came down to the sea. There was a house on the right of one of the beaches. On all the headlands, the gorse was burning, but the northwest wind held the smoke close to the ground.

Those of our troops who were not wax-gray with seasickness, fighting it off, trying to hold onto themselves before they had to grab for the steel side of the boat, were watching the Texas with looks of surprise and happiness. Under the steel helmets they looked like pikemen of the Middle Ages to whose aid in battle had suddenly come some strange and unbelievable monster.

There would be a flash like a blast furnace from the 14-inch guns of the Texas, that would lick far out from the ship. Then the yellow-brown smoke would cloud out and, with the smoke still rolling, the concussion and the report would hit us, jarring the men's helmets. It struck your near ear like a punch with a heavy, dry glove.

Then up on the green rise of a hill that now showed clearly as we moved in would spout two tall black fountains of earth and smoke.

"Look what they're doing to those Germans," I leaned forward to hear a G.I. say above the roar of the motor. "I guess there won't be a man alive there," he said happily.

That is the only thing I remember hearing a G.I. say all that morning. They spoke to one another sometimes, but you could not hear them with the roar the 225-horsepower high-speed gray Diesel made. Mostly, though, they stood silent without speaking. I never saw anyone smile after we left the line of firing ships. They had seen the mysterious monster that was helping them, but now he was gone and they were alone again.

I found if I kept my mouth open from the time I saw the guns flash until after the concussion, it took the shock away.

I was glad when we were inside and out of the line of fire of the Texas and the Arkansas. Other ships were firing over us all day and you were never away from the sud-

den, slapping thud of naval gunfire. But the big guns of the Texas and Arkansas that sounded as though they were throwing whole railway trains across the sky were far away as we moved on in. They were no part of our world as we moved steadily over the gray, whitecapped sea toward where, ahead of us, death was being issued in small, intimate, accurately administered packages. They were like the thunder of a storm that is passing in another county whose rain will never reach you. But they were knocking out the shore batteries, so that later the destroyers could move in almost to the shore when they had to come in to save the landing.

#### Invasion Coast Dead Ahead

Now ahead of us we could see the coast in complete detail. Andy opened the silhouette map with all the beaches and their distinguishing features reproduced on it, and I got my glasses out and commenced drying and wiping them under the shelter of the skirts of my burberry. As far as you could see, there were landing craft moving in over the gray sea. The sun was under at this time, and smoke was blowing all along the coast.

The map that Andy spread on his knees was in ten folded sheets, held together with staples, and marked Appendix One to Annex A. Five different sheets were stapled together and, as I watched Andy open his map, which spread, open, twice as long as a man could reach with outstretched arms, the wind caught it, and the section of the map showing Dog White, Fox Red, Fox Green, Dog Green, Easy Red and part of Sector Charlie snapped twice gaily in the wind and blew overboard.

I had studied this map and memorized most of it, but it is one thing to have it in your memory and another thing to see it actually on paper and be able to check and be sure.

"Have you got a small chart, Andy?" I shouted. "One of those one-sheet ones with just Fox Green and Easy Red?"

"Never had one," said Andy. All this time we were approaching the coast of France, which looked increasingly hostile.

"That the only chart?" I said, close to his ear.

"Only one," said Andy, "and it disintegrated on me. A wave hit it, and it disintegrated. What beach do you think we are opposite?"

"There's the church tower that looks like Colleville," I said. "That ought to be on





"We ran into a good spot on the beach and put our troops and their TNT and their bazookas and their lieutenant ashore, and that was that"



"The beach had been defended as stubbornly and intelligently, as any troops could defend it. And we had taken the beach"

Fox Green. Then there is a house like the one marked on Fox Green and the timber that runs down to the water in a straight line, like on Easy Red."

"That's right," said Andy. "But I think we're too far to the left."

"Those are the features, all right," I said. "I've got them in my head but there shouldn't be any cliffs. The cliffs start to the left of Fox Green where Fox Red beach starts. If that's true, then Fox Green has to be on our right."

"There's a control boat here somewhere," Andy said. "We'll find out what beach we're opposite."

"She can't be Fox Green if there are cliffs," I said.

"That's right," Andy said. "We'll find out from a control boat. Steer for that PC, coxswain. No, not there! Don't you see him? Get ahead of him. You'll never catch him that way."

We never did catch him, either. We slammed into the seas instead of topping them, and the boat pulled away from us. The LCV(P) was bow-heavy with the load of TNT and the weight of the three-eighth-inch steel armor, and where she should have lifted easily over the seas she banged into them and the water came in solidly.

"The hell with him!" Andy said. "We'll ask this LCI."

Landing Craft Infantry are the only amphibious operations craft that look as though they were made to go to sea. They very nearly have the lines of a ship, while the LCV(P)s look like iron bathtubs, and the LCTs like floating freight gondolas. Everywhere you could see, the ocean was covered with these craft but very few of them were headed toward shore. They would start toward the beach, then sheer off and circle back. On the beach itself, in from where we were, there were lines of what looked like tanks, but my glasses were still too wet to function.

"Where's Fox Green beach?" Andy cupped his hands and shouted up at the LCI that was surging past us, loaded with troops.

"Can't hear," someone shouted. We had no megaphone.

"What beach are we opposite?" Andy yelled.

The officer on the LCI shook his head. The other officers did not even look toward us. They were looking over their shoulders at the beach.

"Get her close alongside, coxswain," Andy said. "Come on, get in there close."

We roared up alongside the LCI, then

cut down the motor as she slipped past us.

"Where's Fox Green beach?" Andy yelled, as the wind blew the words away.

"Straight in to your right," an officer shouted.

"Thanks," Andy looked astern at the other two boats and told Ed Banker, the signalman, "Get them to close up. Get them up."

Ed Banker turned around and jerked his forearm, with index finger raised, up and down. "They're closing up, sir," he said.

Looking back you could see the other heavily loaded boats climbing the waves that were green now the sun was out, and pounding down into the troughs.

"You wet all through, sir?" Ed asked me.

"All the way."

"Me, too," Ed said. "Only thing wasn't wet was my belly button. Now it's wet, too."

"This has got to be Fox Green," I said to Andy. "I recognize where the cliff stops. That's all Fox Green to the right. There is the Colleville church. There's the house on the beach. There's the Ruquet Valley on Easy Red to the right. This is Fox Green absolutely."

"We'll check when we get in closer," Andy said. "You really think it's Fox Green?"

"It has to be."

Ahead of us, the various landing craft were all acting in the same confusing manner—heading in, coming out and circling.

### The Tanks Were Stymied

"There's something wrong as hell," I said to Andy. "See the tanks? They're all along the edge of the beach. They haven't gone in at all."

Just then one of the tanks flared up and started to burn with thick black smoke and yellow flame. Farther down the beach, another tank started burning. Along the line of the beach, they were crouched like big yellow toads along the high water line. As I stood up, watching, two more started to burn. The first ones were pouring out gray smoke now, and the wind was blowing it flat along the beach. As I stood up, trying to see if there was anyone in beyond the high water line of tanks, one of the burning tanks blew up with a flash in the streaming gray smoke.

"There's a boat we can check with," Andy said. "Coxswain, steer for that LC over there. Yes, that one. Put her hard over. Come on. Get over there!"

This was a black boat, fast-looking, mounting two machine guns and wallowing slowly out away from the beach, her engine almost idling.

"Can you tell us what beach this is?" Andy shouted.

"Dog White," came the answer.

"Are you sure?"

"Dog White beach," they called from the black boat.

"You checked it?" Andy called.

"It's Dog White beach," they called back from the boat, and their screw churned the water white as they slipped into speed and pulled away from us.

I was discouraged now, because ahead of us, inshore, was every landmark I had memorized on Fox Green and Easy Red beaches. The line of the cliffs that marked the left end of Fox Green beach showed clearly. Every house was where it should be. The steeple of the Colleville church showed exactly as it had in the silhouette. I had studied the charts, the silhouettes, the data on the obstacles in the water and the defenses all one morning, and I remember having asked our captain, Commander W. I. Leahy of the attack transport Dorothea M. Dix, if our attack was to be a diversion in force.

"No," he had said. "Absolutely not. What makes you ask that question?"

"Because these beaches are so highly defensible."

"The Army is going to clear the obstacles and the mines out in the first thirty minutes," Captain Leahy had told me. "They're going to cut lanes in through them for the landing craft."

I wish I could write the full story of what it means to take a transport across through a mine-swept channel; the mathematical precision of maneuver; the infinite detail and chronometrical accuracy and split-second timing of everything from the time the anchor comes up until the boats are lowered and away into the roaring, sea-churning assembly circle from which they break off into the attack wave.

The story of all the teamwork behind that has to be written, but to get all that in would take a book, and this is simply the account of how it was in a LCV(P) on the day we stormed Fox Green beach.

Right at this moment, no one seemed to know where Fox Green beach was. I was sure we were opposite it, but the patrol boat had said this was Dog White beach which should be 4,295 yards to our right, if we were where I knew we were.

"It can't be Dog White, Andy," I said. "Those are the cliffs where Fox Red starts on our left."

"The man says it's Dog White," Andy said.

In the solid-packed troops in the boat, a man with a vertical white bar painted on his helmet was looking at us and shaking his head. He had high cheekbones and a rather flat, puzzled face.

"The lieutenant says he knows it, and we're on Fox Green," Ed Banker shouted back at us. He spoke again to the lieutenant but we could not hear what they said.

Andy shouted at the lieutenant, and he nodded his helmeted head up and down.

"He says it's Fox Green," Andy said. "Ask him where he wants to go in," I said.

### Leading in the Seventh Wave

Just then another small black patrol boat with several officers in it came toward us from the beach, and an officer stood up in it and megaphoned, "Are there any boats here for the seventh wave on Fox Green beach?"

There was one boat for that wave with us, and the officer shouted to them to follow their boat.

"Is this Fox Green?" Andy called to them.

"Yes. Do you see that ruined house? Fox Green beach runs for eleven hundred and thirty-five yards to the right of that ruined house."

"Can you get into the beach?"

"I can't tell you that. You will have to ask a beach control boat."

"Can't we just run in?"

"I have no authority on that. You must ask the beach control boat."

"Where is it?"

"Way out there somewhere."

"We can go in where an LCV(P) has been in or an LCI," I said. "It's bound to be clear where they run in, and we can go in under the lee of one."

"We'll look for the control boat," Andy said, and we went banging out to sea through the swarming traffic of landing craft and lighters.

"I can't find her," Andy said. "She isn't here. She ought to be in closer. We have to get the hell in. We're late now. Let's go in."

"Ask him where he is supposed to land," I said.

Andy went down and talked to the lieutenant. I could see the lieutenant's lips moving as he spoke, but could hear nothing above the engine noise.

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# HOW TO SWALLOW A SWORD

BY  
THE GREAT ZADMA  
AS TOLD TO JULE  
JUNKER MANNIX

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR COLLIER'S BY KARGER-PIX

The author of this informative treatise who once held the American sword-swallowing record—a 26-inch blade—says dagger gulping makes a fine parlor trick. For our part, he can have it. However, if you want to try, here's how

Louise Long (right) swallows a Civil War bayonet with a 24-inch blade. Below, Patricia Smith has gulped down a neon tube. Note the glow through her throat. Both girls are with Ringling Brothers' Circus



I WILL never forget the first time I swallowed a lighted, two-foot neon tube. The tube was a bootlegged one, like all neons used by sword swallowers at that time, because the electrical companies wouldn't allow anyone to buy a tube if they knew he intended to swallow it.

Several sword swallowers had been killed by the tubes breaking inside of them, and the companies felt it was bad publicity. In fact, the general manager of a neon company even ran a little notice in *The Billboard* saying: "Our tubes are not designed to be swallowed, and the company discourages having them put to this use." But the companies couldn't discourage the sword swallowers.

Neon-tube swallowing was the most significant innovation to the art since 1667 when Richardson, the English artist, swallowed an umbrella, and made sword-swallowing history. Later, he tried to open the umbrella as an additional flourish, but the results were unhappy. Neon swallowing is really a lovely effect. All the lights are turned off and, in the darkness, the lighted tubes glow like precious stones. Then the artist, stripped to the waist, takes a tube and swallows it to the hilt, thus extinguishing the light. But almost instantly the light is seen again, this time glowing out through the body of the artist. The effort is indescribably weird. Usually several people faint, and this makes the trick very popular. A good neon swallower can command a price of ten to fifteen dollars a week anywhere, until the tube finally bursts inside of him and he is killed.

As a young man, I was working with a carnival as a sword swallower and was, like most boys, very ambitious. I wanted desperately to be a neon swallower and at last I got my break.

At the time, I was living in the side show's truck with Flamo, the fire eater. One night while we were playing Trenton, N. J., he located a little shop where the electrician said he would make me up a couple of tubes for my act. With neons, you must make an electrical connection at both ends of the tube before the gas inside will light. If you have just swallowed two thirds of the tube, this is naturally hard to do, and so for swallowing, the tubes are made U-shaped so the ends can stick out of your mouth. This means swallowing a double tube which is naturally much harder than swallowing a thin sword blade, and so the tube has to be made as thin as possible. The thin tubes are naturally brittle and therefore very likely to break inside of you.

Flamo and I picked up the tubes one evening after our last show. We packed the precious things up very carefully in a suitcase full of crinkled newspaper, so they wouldn't break. Neons can't be run off an ordinary power line unless you have a step-up transformer, so when he got back to the truck, Flamo sneaked out and hooked us on to the main city power line. I waited for him in the truck, and it was a frightening feeling to see those two tubes beside me suddenly glow out red and yellow with their uncanny witch light.

"Flamo, I'm getting scared," I told him when he came back.

## Making a Living—the Hard Way

We had just been reading in *The Billboard* of the death of Prince Neon, the first man to be a neon swallower. The tube had broken inside of him and he died in the hospital a week later. The Human Electric Light Bulb, who had followed him, had got a short circuit somehow and died before he could be carried off his platform. Sometimes, the game hardly seemed worth while.

"Well, if you're scared, kid, I wouldn't swallow 'em," Flamo urged me. "Your throat'll tighten up and snap the tube."

I knew if I were going to swallow them, I'd have to do it at once, before they got too hot. If you swallow a hot tube, it will stick to your insides and you can't withdraw it. This is pretty bad when it happens. So I picked up the nearest tube and, with Flamo watching me doubtfully, I wiped it the way I wipe a sword before swallowing it. A sword swallower always wipes a sword because the smallest bit of dirt or dust on the blade may make him gag or even tear the delicate lining of the stomach.

Fortunately, the roof of the truck was high enough so I could stand with my head thrown back and the tube held straight up from my lips. I held it by the electrical connections with my right hand, and with my cupped left I guided it down my throat. The basic principle of sword swallowing is to establish a straight line from the throat to the stomach. As the tube slid down, it was pleasantly warm, un- the chill of steel, but terribly wide. I had to force it a little as it began its descent.

I felt it strike my breastbone. This is always a creepy feeling, as it sends a shudder all through you, and very often even a slight blow will bruise the bone so it aches afterward. I can only describe the feeling as similar to a sharp blow on the solar plexus in boxing, but you will have to experience the sensation yourself to understand it. The tip of the tube slipped off the bone and glided down smoothly until my right hand holding the electrical connections of the tube touched my lips.

I withdrew the tube and turned to Flamo. "Did it shine through my chest?" I asked eagerly.

"Son, you shone like a jack-o'-lantern," he assured me respectfully. "It's a wonderful act. I was darned near taken sick myself."

The next night I performed with (Continued on page 49)